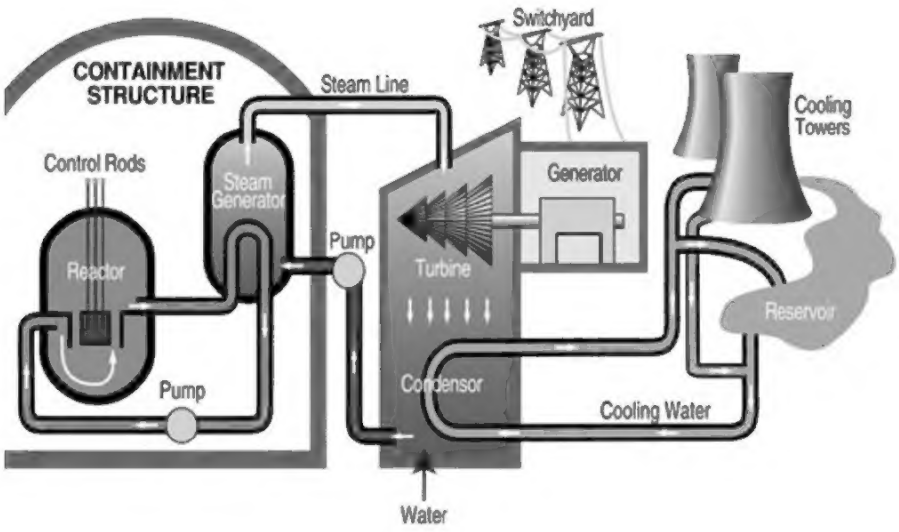
Nuclear reactors & Small modular reactors




Nuclear reactors primarily serve for electricity generation by harnessing heat from nuclear fission to produce steam that drives turbines. Beyond this, they have applications in marine propulsion, research, and the production of radioisotopes for various uses like medical treatments and space exploration.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:
1. Electricity Generation:
Nuclear reactors are the core of nuclear power plants, where controlled nuclear fission reactions generate heat.
This heat is used to produce steam, which then powers turbines connected to generators, producing

electricity.
Nuclear power provides a significant portion of the world's low-carbon electricity, making it a crucial energy source in the fight against climate change.

2. Marine Propulsion:
Nuclear reactors power a variety of naval vessels, including submarines and aircraft carriers, due to their high energy density and long operational range.
The ability to operate for extended periods without refueling makes nuclear propulsion ideal for these applications.

3. Research and Development:
Research reactors are used for scientific investigations, materials testing, and the production of radioisotopes.
These reactors help advance our understanding of nuclear science and technology and support various applications.

4. Radioisotope Production:
Nuclear reactors produce radioisotopes used in medical imaging, cancer treatment, sterilization of medical equipment, and various industrial

applications.
Radioisotope power systems are also used in space exploration to power spacecraft and scientific instruments.

5. Other Applications:
Desalination:
Nuclear reactors can provide the heat needed for large-scale desalination plants to produce fresh water from seawater.

Hydrogen Production:
The heat from nuclear reactors can be used in various processes to produce hydrogen, a clean energy carrier.

Industrial Processes:
High-temperature heat from nuclear reactors can be used in various industrial processes like cement and steel production.

Agriculture:
Nuclear techniques can be used in agriculture for plant mutation, pest control, and crop preservation.
Criminal Investigations:

Nuclear techniques can be used in forensic science to analyze evidence.

Nuclear reactor types:

Nuclear reactors can be broadly categorized into thermal and fast reactors, and further classified by their cooling and moderating materials. Common types include Pressurized Water Reactors (PWRs), Boiling Water Reactors (BWRs), Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), and various Gas-Cooled Reactors (GCRs).

Here's a more detailed look at the main types:

1. Thermal Reactors:
Pressurized Water Reactors (PWRs):
These are the most common type globally. They use ordinary water (light water) as both coolant and moderator, and the water is kept under high pressure to prevent boiling.

Boiling Water Reactors (BWRs):
Also using light water, BWRs allow the water to boil inside the reactor core, producing steam that

directly drives a turbine.

Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs):
These reactors use heavy water (deuterium oxide) as both coolant and moderator, often using natural uranium as fuel.

Gas-Cooled Reactors (GCRs):
GCRs use a gas (like carbon dioxide or helium) to cool the reactor core. Some GCRs also use graphite as a moderator.

2. Fast Reactors:
Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs): FBRs operate with fast neutrons, which means they don't need a moderator. They can also "breed" new fissile material, potentially making better use of uranium resources.

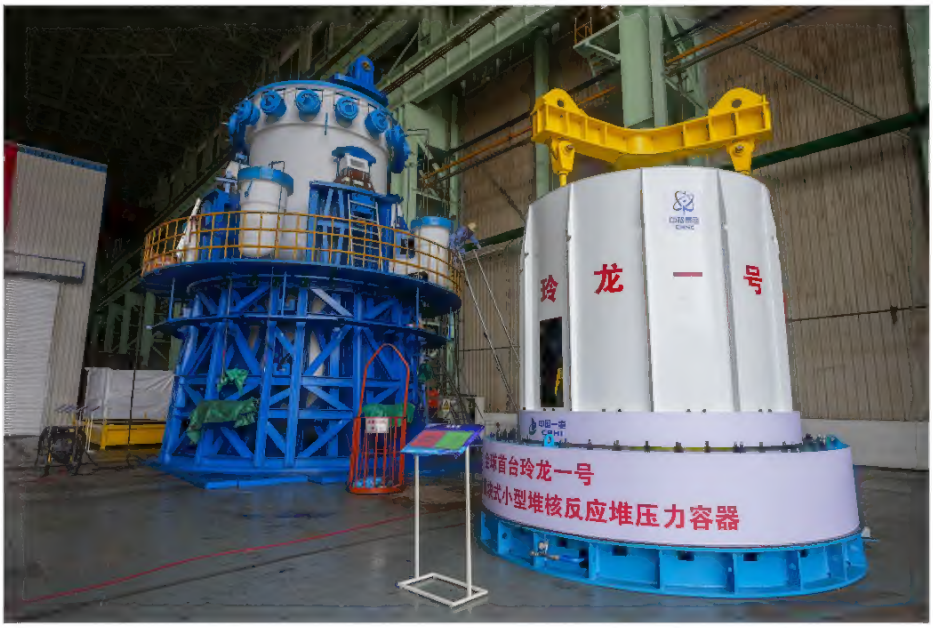
3. Other Categories:

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs):
These are smaller, factory-built reactors that can be transported and deployed more flexibly. According to a report from the Canadian government

cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca, they offer potential advantages for various applications.

Fusion Reactors:
While still in development, fusion reactors aim to replicate the power source of the sun by fusing atomic nuclei, rather than splitting them.

Small modular reactors (SMRs):




regarding the handling and transportation of nuclear materials.

**Waste Management:**
SMRs still produce radioactive waste, and the long-term management of this waste is an ongoing challenge.

**Regulatory Hurdles:**
The regulatory process for SMRs is still developing, and this could pose challenges to deployment.

Examples of SMR Designs:
**NuScale Power Module:**
A light-water reactor design that has received design approval and is ready for deployment.

**Rolls-Royce SMR:**
A design that aims to use proven and commercially available technology to deliver a fully integrated, factory-built nuclear power plant.

**Other Designs:**
Various other SMR designs are under development, including those based on high-temperature gas reactors, molten salt reactors, and other advanced technologies.
SMRs represent a promising technology that could play a significant role in the future of nuclear energy, offering a range of potential benefits. However, there are also challenges that need to be addressed before SMRs can be widely deployed.

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) are nuclear fission reactors with a power output of up to 300 Megawatts electric (MWe), significantly smaller than traditional nuclear power plants. They are designed to be modular and can be factory-built and assembled in various configurations.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

**Output Range:**

SMRs typically range from 20 MWe to 300 MWe.

**Comparison to Traditional Reactors:**

Traditional nuclear power plants can generate over 1,000 MWe, while SMRs offer a smaller footprint and more flexible deployment options.

**Modular Design:**

The "modular" aspect allows for factory fabrication of components and easier on-site assembly, potentially reducing construction time and costs.

**Applications:**

SMRs can be used for on-grid electricity generation, powering smaller communities or industrial applications. They can also be suitable for remote

or off-grid locations.

**Examples:**
NuScale Power is developing a 77 MWe reactor module. Rolls-Royce SMR is developing a 470 MWe design.

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